



# Montgomery County Council

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**For Immediate Release**

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***Would address tattered "safety net"...***

## **COUNCIL PRESIDENT EWING INTRODUCES \$1 MILLION APPROPRIATION TO ADDRESS COUNTY'S MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS**

Council President Blair Ewing moved today to protect the County's most vulnerable residents by proposing a special appropriation of \$1 million to address a crisis in the County's mental health system that grows worse with each passing day.

The appropriation includes \$750,000 to provide emergency care for the approximately 4,000 patients served by CPC Health, which may close in the near future. There is still no agreement to purchase all or parts of CPC's operation. The proposal also includes \$250,000 for the balance of this fiscal year to expand County efforts to provide treatment, outreach, and housing for persons with mental health conditions.

"Mental health is a state responsibility, but the state of Maryland has gone AWOL from its responsibility," said Council President Ewing. "We cannot allow people who desperately need services to go without them.

"We have repeatedly sought state help to no avail. In fact, the state may face a \$30 million deficit in Medicaid funding and a \$12 million shortfall in mental health funding next year and may cut services further this current fiscal year.

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“My understanding is that the County government is prepared to try to plug this gap and then present the Council with a bill. That’s much too ad hoc and not the way we ought to do business. The more fiscally responsible approach is to appropriate needed funds now.

“I also want to look at continuing some of our mental health service improvements in the budget for the next fiscal year and urge the County Executive to include some or all in his proposed budget due out March 15.”

The Ewing proposal would:

- Provide \$750,000 in one-time-only transition costs to ensure the continuation of mental health services to publicly supported clients of CPC Health.
- Expand the hours of the County’s Mobil Crisis Team of trained mental health professionals from 12 hours a day (noon ‘til midnight) to 16 hours a day (10 AM to 2 AM). \$15,000 for coverage to July 1. Annualized cost: \$150,000.
- Expand services at Men’s Emergency Shelter to provide for full-time case management and staff coverage to keep shelter open during the day on Saturday and Sunday. \$10,000 until July 1. Annualized cost: \$77,100.
- Expand the County’s Access Team by three positions to expand single-point access and referral to make sure families and individuals in need get what they need. \$25,000 until July 1. Annualized cost: \$240,000.
- Establish a County housing fund for maintenance of housing for people with mental illness. \$60,000 to July 1. Annualized cost: \$500,000.
- Provide administrative grant support for each of eight providers of outpatient clinic services to maximize reimbursement by the state for eligible clients. \$80,000 to July 1. Annualized cost: \$750,000.
- Expand services at the County-operated Silver Spring Child and Adolescent Clinic and the Silver Spring Multicultural Clinic that serve clients throughout the County. \$60,000 to July 1. Annualized cost: \$480,000.
- Develop a plan for people with mental illness in the correctional system, with a report to the Council by July. # # #